

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): A riser connector for connecting first and second tubulars of an offshore riser for transporting fluids between a well-head at the sea-bed and the surface, the connector comprising:

a first portion on the first tubular, said first portion having first and second axially extending portions and a threaded portion positioned therebetween, the first axially extending portion being located between the threaded portion and the terminus of the first tubular; and

a second portion on the second tubular, said second portion having first and second axially extending portions and a threaded portion positioned therebetween, the first axially extending portion being located between the threaded portion and the terminus of the second tubular;

wherein the second axially extending portion of the first portion and the first axially extending portion of the second portion are greater in length than the first axially extending portion of the first portion and the second axially extending portion of the second portion;

and wherein, in the assembled connector, the first axially extending portion of the first portion is axially aligned with the second axially extending portion of the second portion, and the second axially extending portion of the first portion is axially aligned with the first axially extending portion of the second portion, and the first and second axially extending portions of the first and second portions are mutually parallel, and the second axially extending portion of the first portion engages the first axially extending portion of the second portion.

Claims 2-7 (Canceled)

Claim 8 (Previously Presented): A riser connector as claimed in Claim 1 wherein a spigot and a socket comprise the axially extending portions on each tubular.

Claim 9 (Canceled)

Claim 10 (Previously Presented): A riser connector as claimed in Claim 8 wherein the spigot on the first tubular engages the socket on the second tubular.

Claim 11 (Original): A riser connector as claimed in Claim 10 wherein the spigot on the second tubular engages the socket on the first tubular.

Claim 12 (Original): A riser connector as claimed in Claim 11 wherein the first tubular comprises a pin connector.

Claim 13 (Original): A riser connector as claimed in Claim 12 wherein the second tubular comprises a box connector.

Claim 14 (Original): A riser connector as claimed in Claim 13 wherein the socket of the first tubular and spigot on the second tubular are greater in length than the socket of the second tubular and spigot of the first tubular.

Claim 15 (Original): A riser connector as claimed in Claim 14 wherein the axially extending portions are parallel to the axis of the tubulars.

Claim 16 (Original): A riser connector as claimed in Claim 15 wherein the first and second tubulars have a tapered profile.

Claim 17 (Original): A riser connector as claimed in Claim 16 wherein the tapered portions of the first and second tubulars are the threaded portions of the first and second tubulars and have co-operating tapers to facilitate mating of the two portions.

Claim 18 (Canceled)

Claim 19 (Previously Presented): A riser connector as claimed in Claim 1 wherein the threaded portions of the first and second tubulars are mutually engaging threaded portions.

Claim 20 (Original): A riser connector as claimed in Claim 1 wherein the axially extending portions are unthreaded.

Claim 21 (Original): A riser connector as claimed in Claim 1 wherein the axially extending portions are load-bearing and allow the transfer of loads between the tubulars.

Claim 22 (Original): A riser connector as claimed in Claim 21 wherein the axially extending portions allow the transfer of bending loads between the tubulars.

Claims 23-24 (Canceled)

Claim 25 (Previously Presented): A riser connector as claimed in Claim 1, wherein the second axially extending portion of the first portion and the first axially extending portion of the second portion are at least 2" long, and the first axially extending portion of the first tubular and the second axially extending portion of the second portion are at least 0.5" long.

Claim 26 (Previously Presented): A riser connector as claimed in Claim 1, wherein the second axially extending portion of the first portion and the first axially extending portion of the second portion are 3.5" long.

Claim 27 (Previously Presented): A riser connector as claimed in Claim 1, wherein the second axially extending portion of the first portion and the first axially extending portion of the second portion are 6" long.

Claim 28 (Previously Presented): A riser connector as claimed in Claim 1, wherein the first axially extending portion of the first portion and the second axially extending portion of the second portion are 1" long.

Claim 29 (Previously Presented): A riser connector as claimed in Claim 1, wherein the first axially extending portion of the first portion and the second axially extending portion of the second portion are 2" long.

Claim 30 (Canceled)

Claim 31 (Previously Presented): A riser connector as claimed in Claim 1, wherein, in the assembled connector, the first axially extending portion of the first portion engages the second axially extending portion of the second portion.

Claim 32 (Previously Presented): A riser connector as claimed in Claim 1, wherein, during assembly of the connector, the second axially extending portion of the first portion and the first axially extending portion of the second portion are engaged before the first axially extending portion of the first portion and the second axially extending portion of the second portion are engaged.

Claim 33 (Previously Presented): A riser connector as claimed in Claim 1, wherein, during assembly of the connector, the second axially extending portion of the first portion and the first axially extending portion of the second portion are engaged before the respective threaded portions are engaged.

Claim 34 (Previously Presented): A riser connector as claimed in Claim 1, wherein, during assembly of the connector, the first axially extending portion of the first portion and the second axially extending portion of the second portion are engaged before the respective threaded portions are engaged.

Claim 35 (Previously Presented): A riser connector as claimed in Claim 1, further comprising at least one seal.

Claim 36 (Previously Presented): A riser connector as claimed in Claim 34, wherein two seals are provided.

Claim 37 (Previously Presented): A riser connector as claimed in Claim 36, wherein a first seal is adapted to prevent fluid being released from inside the connector to the threaded and axially extending portions of the connector.

Claim 38 (Previously Presented): A riser connector as claimed in Claim 37, wherein a second seal is adapted to prevent ingress of fluid from outside the connector to the threaded and axially extending portions of the connector.

Claim 39 (Previously Presented): A riser connector as claimed in Claim 35, wherein the at least one seal is formed from differential angle tapers on respective axially extending portions.

Claim 40 (Previously Presented): A riser connector as claimed in Claim 36, wherein the seals are formed from differential angle tapers on each of the first and second axially extending portions.

Claim 41 (New): A method for connecting a first tubular to a second tubular in a riser for transporting fluids between a well-head at the sea-bed and the surface, the connection being achieved via a riser connector comprising:

a first portion on the first tubular, said first portion having first and second axially extending portions and a threaded portion positioned therebetween, the first axially extending portion being located between the threaded portion and the terminus of the first tubular; and

a second portion on the second tubular, said second portion having first and second axially extending portions and a threaded portion positioned therebetween, the first axially extending portion being located between the threaded portion and the terminus of the second tubular;

wherein the second axially extending portion of the first portion and the first axially extending portion of the second portion are greater in length than the first axially extending portion of the first portion and the second axially extending portion of the second portion;

and wherein, in the assembled connector, the first axially extending portion of the first portion is axially aligned with the second axially extending portion of the second portion, and the second axially extending portion of the first portion is axially aligned with the first axially extending portion of the second portion, and the first and second axially extending portions of the first and second portions are mutually parallel, and the first axially extending portion of the first portion engages the second axially extending portion of the second portion;

said method comprising the steps of:

gripping the second tubular at a position spaced from its terminus;

engaging the first and second tubulars;

gripping the first tubular; and

applying torque between the tubulars.

Claim 42 (New): A riser connector for connecting first and second tubulars of an offshore riser for transporting fluids between a well-head at the sea-bed and the surface, the connector comprising:

a first portion on the first tubular, said first portion having first and second axially extending portions and a threaded portion positioned therebetween, the first axially extending portion being located between the threaded portion and the terminus of the first tubular; and

a second portion on the second tubular, said second portion having first and second axially extending portions and a threaded portion positioned therebetween, the first axially extending portion being located between the threaded portion and the terminus of the second tubular;

wherein the second axially extending portion of the first portion and the first axially extending portion of the second portion are greater in length than the first axially extending portion of the first portion and the second axially extending portion of the second portion;

and wherein, in the assembled connector, the first axially extending portion of the first portion is axially aligned with the second axially extending portion of the second portion, and the second axially extending portion of the first portion is axially aligned with the first axially extending portion of the second portion, and the first and second axially extending portions of the first and second portions are mutually parallel, and the first axially extending portion of the first portion engages the second axially extending portion of the second portion.

Claim 43 (New): A riser connector for connecting first and second tubulars of an offshore riser for transporting fluids between a well-head at the sea-bed and the surface, the connector comprising:

a first portion on the first tubular, said first portion having first and second axially extending portions and a threaded portion positioned therebetween, the first axially extending portion being located between the threaded portion and the terminus of the first tubular; and

a second portion on the second tubular, said second portion having first and second axially extending portions and a threaded portion positioned therebetween, the first axially extending portion being located between the threaded portion and the terminus of the second tubular;

wherein, in the assembled connector, the first and second axially extending portions of the first and second portions are mutually parallel, and the second axially extending portion of the first portion engages the first axially extending portion of the second portion.

Claim 44 (New): A riser connector for connecting first and second tubulars of an offshore riser for transporting fluids between a well-head at the sea-bed and the surface, the connector comprising:

a first portion on the first tubular, said first portion having first and second axially extending portions and a threaded portion positioned therebetween, the first axially extending portion being located between the threaded portion and the terminus of the first tubular; and

a second portion on the second tubular, said second portion having first and second axially extending portions and a threaded portion positioned therebetween, the first axially extending portion being located between the threaded portion and the terminus of the second tubular;

wherein, in the assembled connector, the first and second axially extending portions of the first and second portions are mutually parallel, and the first axially extending portion of the first portion engages the second axially extending portion of the second portion.

Claim 45 (New): A riser connector for connecting first and second tubulars of an offshore riser for transporting fluids between a well-head at the sea-bed and the surface, the connector comprising:

a first portion on the first tubular, said first portion having first and second axially extending portions and a threaded portion positioned therebetween, the first axially extending portion being located between the threaded portion and the terminus of the first tubular;

a second portion on the second tubular, said second portion having first and second axially extending portions and a threaded portion positioned therebetween, the first axially extending portion being located between the threaded portion and the terminus of the second tubular; and

at least one seal formed from differential angle tapers on respective axially extending portions;

wherein the second axially extending portion of the first portion and the first axially extending portion of the second portion are greater in length than the first axially extending portion of the first portion and the second axially extending portion of the second portion;

and wherein, in the assembled connector, the first axially extending portion of the first portion is axially aligned with the second axially extending portion of the second portion, and the second axially extending portion of the first portion is axially aligned with the first axially extending portion of the second portion, and the first and second axially extending portions of the first and second portions are mutually parallel.